

# Outlook on Lifestyle

## Family provides home for over 28 children

The Halton Children's Aid Society is looking forward to new directions in fostering. Couples and families are providing homes for children for just a year as fostering may be a short-term commitment or a career experience. The following interview with these Halton foster parents reflects the rewards of influencing a child's life. To become a foster parent in Burlington, Oakville, Milton or Halton Hills, screening and training is involved and a per diem rate paid. For more information, please call Foster Care, 844-8211 or 878-2375.

The Schmuck household has seen over 28 children pass through their doors. That is not to say that all the children have been their own. Father Althea and Peter Schmuck of Oakville are involved with foster parenting.

While many parents may struggle with their own few children, the Schmucks have provided a temporary home for at least 28 children, not including three of their own. For the past 19 years they have offered a foster home to newborn babies and adolescents alike.

"I was always interested in children," said Mrs. Schmuck, a former secretary. "It is quite a challenge, but you still have quite a bit of fun with them."

Peter Schmuck, a Goodyear employee, and Althea Schmuck, who retired about a year ago, have three of their own children (two are married), but were not apprehensive about becoming involved with the foster parent program. Currently their home is shared with two female foster children and their youngest son.

Though they provide only a temporary home for varying time, Mrs. Schmuck noted they sometimes keep in touch with former foster children.

"One girl in particular is like my own daughter. She is 27 years old and I had her for seven years, from the age of 12 to 19. Her child is like my own grandchild."

Mrs. Schmuck, whose other interests are visiting senior citizens and the women ministries at her church, commented that some children "have special needs, but for the most part we treat them like our own kids."

The Schmucks believe the qualities that make a competent foster parent include understanding, flexibility, firmness and the ability to listen closely.

"You have to be flexible because each one has a different personality and you have to study the person," said Mrs. Schmuck. "Put yourself in the child's place and always be available to listen."

She also noted the importance for a foster parent to admit their mistakes and "to apologize to the child. This is what they want from their own parents."

Their home is one that does not rely heavily on rules and regulations. Rather they give consideration to a foster child's rights and expect the same from anyone who enters.

"Before a child comes into our home I usually tell them that all I want is consideration for us and we'll have consideration for them. It's a two-way street."

The decision to become foster parents required very little adjustments in their lives and the "every day adjustments" depend on the child, she said.

"Sometimes if our personalities clashed, it was very difficult, awkward. Then we just tried harder. You just have to find out what their interests are and then take an equal interest in it."

"You have to try and break through barriers."

One foster child has been with the family for three months. The other has been with the Schmucks for three years and stated that her adjustments have been to "get used to living with new people. I have to adjust to new surroundings. It's just like living in a regular home though

and it's the same sort of adjustments."

Though Mrs. Schmuck knows the joys and rewards of foster parenting, she does know the disappointment of a failed relationship with a foster child.

"You feel guilty when it doesn't work. You ask yourself if you tried hard enough. It's hard when they're angry at the world and they want to take their anger out on you. They feel you owe them something."

She believes a foster child has to do his or her part also. However, despite a foster parent's efforts sometimes a child won't compromise.

"But you can't take it so personally," advises Mrs. Schmuck. "A foster parent is already going more than halfway."

A foster parent is not alone in the situation. The Agency worker assigned to the case by the Children's Aid Society is available for the family.

Mrs. Schmuck commented that the social worker "will give moral support when we need it. Give opinions and will be very supportive."

"It used to be different. There was a social worker with each new child. Now there is only one social worker with our family. That is much nicer."

It's important for people to realize the challenge of foster parenting and to be prepared. However, it's equally important to remember the needs of a child about to enter a foster home.

"It's important for them (children) to know the truth about foster homes. They may have the wrong ideas and misconceptions. Then they just don't want to come in to one," Mrs. Schmuck said.

The Schmucks' foster child recalled the first time she entered a foster home. "I was so scared and I cried. I just didn't want to come. I had come from a bad situation as it was and I had heard so many bad things (about a foster home)."

"I can now see how stupid it was to think that, but then when other kids in the shelters (and group homes) are telling you this, it gets really scary. I don't think they do it deliberately. I think they have the same wrong ideas and they just pass on what they've heard. It's like a vicious circle."

Misconceptions point to the need for education for both new foster parents as well as those children about to become members of a foster home.

The Schmucks' two foster children, in response to this need, will soon be involved in talking with other children in group homes about foster homes. Their hope is to shatter the misconceptions. "Some kids are going to come with a negative attitude towards the foster parents," said Mrs. Schmuck. "It's important for new parents to realize this."

Mrs. Schmuck concluded that "This foster home is a home where they can come and feel safe."

## We're recycling leaders

In an unprecedented move, the soft drink industry and its suppliers have joined together to make Ontario the world leader in multi-material recycling.

Ontario Multi-Material Recycling Inc. (OMMRI), an industry supported organization, has announced that it will spend \$20 million over the next four years to put in place a provincial network to recycle glass, metal, newspapers and plastic bottles in rural and urban communities.

"In close cooperation with the Ministry of Environment, it's our goal to develop a recycling network across the province which will give all citizens an opportunity to recycle. At the same time it will provide a means of reducing the amount of waste going into landfill," said Robert Flemington, President of OMMRI.

Ontario Environment Minister Jim Bradley is enthusiastic about the soft drink industry's response to his ministry's regulations, designed to increase the amount of soft drink container materials being recycled in the province.

"I commend the soft drink industry for making this important commitment to meeting their environmental obligations," Bradley said.

Under the new industry program, people will be encouraged to use special household recycling boxes for all glass or metal food and beverage containers, newspapers and plastic soft drink bottles. Recycling program operators will then

pick up these materials at the curb on a regular garbage day.

For areas where a curbside program is impractical, Flemington said OMMRI will "work to ensure that those residents will also have an opportunity to recycle through centralized dropoff depots and specially designed programs".



## Photo Tips by Peter Moss

Last Minute Packing

As Friday marks the start of March Break time I thought I would provide you with a last minute check list for your equipment.

Main Equipment:

- One or both camera main bodies.
- Wide angle-telephoto and/or zoom lens.
- Cable release.

Motor drive (if you have one).

Skylight filters for each lens.

Electronic flash unit.

Synch. cord for flash unit.

Extra batteries for ALL equipment.

Film supplies (take lots of extra film)

A film shield bag for your field. (This is a commercially made lead foil bag to prevent fogging of film by x-rays). If you do not have a bag or cannot obtain one, simply tell the security staff at the airport to visually inspect the bag. They usually will at almost all airports.

A blower brush.

Lens cleaning kit.

A folding mini-tripod.

Optional Equipment:

Although you have filled your gadget bag by now, there still might be a touch of space left where you can add a few optional items.

1. If you are going to be around sand or snow, take your polarizing filter. It can save your day.
2. Your full size tripod if you can manage it.
3. A cross screen filter for EFFECTIVE STAR HIGHLIGHTS on your scenes or subject.

4. Your plastic bags for shooting in and around surf or sand.
5. Lens hoods for your lenses.
6. A 2x tele-converter to help pull in those long shots.
7. Close-up filters for dynamic flower shots.

Now, that should about complete the well equipped photographer for your one or two week trip. If you take any more gear you will probably be overloaded and will therefore be less likely to go out and take pictures!

Remember, if you have a camera technical problem, please try to find a camera store rather than attempting to solve the problem yourself. If you cannot obtain the assistance of a good camera shop, remember first and foremost to REMOVE your film from the camera before trying to make any minor mechanical problems. If the damage or problem is major in scope, bring the camera back home to have major repairs done.

Have a safe holiday, get lots of great pictures, see you next week.

## PETER G. MOSS PHOTOGRAPHY

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## Tasty Recipes

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### SPANISH RICE

- 3 slices bacon, diced
- 3 slices onion, diced
- 3 cups cooked rice
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 2 cups tomatoes

Cook bacon and onion until brown. Add rice, salt, pepper and tomatoes. Mix thoroughly. Place in an oiled baking dish, cover with buttered crumbs and bake at 375° for 30 minutes. Serves 6.



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## TOP TEN MOVIE RENTALS

- |                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Maximum Overdrive | 6 <sup>th</sup> Police Academy III |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Blue City         | 7 <sup>th</sup> Raw Deal           |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Cobra             | 8 <sup>th</sup> Delta Force        |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Howard The Duck   | 9 <sup>th</sup> Murphy's Law       |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Manhattan Project | 10 <sup>th</sup> The Untouchables  |

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